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ABSTRACT

Daily transitions in early childhood centers and classrooms include periods when children are completing one activity, preparing to begin a new activity, and moving from place to place in a room or building. Transition activities involve teaching techniques that prepare learners to listen, relax, sit down, move between locations or activities, and apply their learning. Criteria to consider when planning transition activities include the purpose and length of the activity, activities that precede and follow the transition activity, materials needed, space available, and the amount of teacher direction required. Activities suggested for transition times relate to children's: (1) arrival at the center; (2) cleaning up and putting away materials; (3) preparation for activities; (4) relaxation; (5) need for quiet times; (6) preparation for listening; and (7) movement from place to place. A list of songs for the teacher and children to sing during transition times is provided. (BC)

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Children and Transition Time

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Young children spend much of the day in transition. There are times when children join others, begin new experiences or change activities. There are periods when children complete activities before others, and there are periods when the group prepares to begin a new activity. There are times for movement from place to place in the room, as well as movement throughout the building. These are transition times and should be planned with activities to move the day along with optimum living and learning experiences.

Transition means a change or passing from one condition, place, thing, activity, or topic to another. The first transition occurs when the child comes from home to the school or day care setting. The young child may be active, imaginative, creative, curious, and eager to gain approval, or the young child may be shy and hesitant to join into a new and different experience. Therfore; there must be a teacher or care giver who is caring, understanding, imaginative, and creative, and a well planned environment to avoid tedious waiting and chaos.

Transition Activities

Transition activities are not teaching gimmicks, but are a teaching technique. The purpose of the technique is to prepare the young learner to listen, to relax, to sit down, to motivate, to move from place to place or

activity to activity, and to allow an opportunity to apply and to reinforce learning while others in the group complete the task.

Transition activities differ from regular activities in purpose, lenth, and the frequency they occur in the schedule. Some transition activities become a part of the daily routine.

Successful transitions can develop from current lessons or activities. Transition activities are usually simple and require easily available materials or no materials at all.

Transition times may be quiet or very active. Children need a variety, and they will respond according to their individual feelings. Selection should be based on the developmental needs and interest of the children. Consideration should be given the activity preceding and the activity that will follow as well as the physical setting and space.

Planning Transition Time for Children

Transition time for children requires attention and planning. Activities go along well until there has to be a change from one activity to another as children begin to complete tasks. Careful planning can make the period a time of learning as well as comfortably moving through the daily routines.

Activities may be derived from a variety of sources. Fingerplay and poetry books, records, songs, rhythms, and game books suggest ideas that can be adapted for transition.

Consider the following criteria when planning transition time:

-Purpose of the Activity

-Length of the Activity

-Preceding Activity

-Activity to Follow

-Materials needed

-Space available

-Type of Activity

(teacher directed, independent, large or small group).

-Learning Opportunities

-Direction Needed

Direction should be clearly stated for the children. Transition activities may be teacher directed or independent activities. They may be large group, small group, or individualized activities. The carpet, circle area, or designated tables provide an appropriate space for this type of activity.

Suggested Activities

The following activities suggest techniques to prepare children to relax, to listen, to sit down, to move from place to place and activity to activity with ease while providing and opportunity for learning and applying and reinforcing concepts.

Arrival at the Center or Preschool

Greet the child with a smile or welcome and show him what activity to do.

Greet the child and provide choices for him to decide the first activity of the day.

Make name cards for each child. On arrival give the child the name card to place in a box or basket decorated for the season. At circle time count and see how many names are in the box or basket and who is present.

Construct an attendance chart and on arrival the child can place a star, gum seal or mark by his name. This can be taken home later.

Construct a choice board to identify learning centers in the room. Allow the child to select a learning center to work in independently.

Cleaning Up of Putting Away Materials

Listen to music while putting away materials. Tell the children something to listen for in the music.

Group the children in teams to be responsible for different centers in the room.

Construct a "Helper Chart" listing the clean-up responsibilities.

Sing while putting away materials or cleaning up.

Write words to familiar tunes.

Example:

Tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb

It is time to clean up

To clean up, to clean up.

It is time to clean up

Put your work away.

Preparing for Another Activity

Use puppets to give directions. Example: Finger puppets, paper bag puppets, stick puppets. There are many ideas for teacher made puppets as well as commercial puppets available.

Make a cover for a picture or chart about the activity or topic of discussion by folding a piece of butcher paper the size of the picture or chart and cutting three sided openings in the paper. Number the openings. Place over the picture. Open the number and have children guess activity or topic of discussion.

Play a record or play the piano and stop the music. When the music stops call names of children and where they will work.

Walk in imaginary shapes. Example: circle, square, rectangle.

Construct a "feel box or bag." Place in the bag or box objects to identify the next activity. Let each child look to determine the next activity.

Ideas For Relaxing

Pretend you are a bowl of jello and shake all over.

Make believe you are blowing up a big balloon. Blow harder and harder until the balloon burst. Then sit and relax.

Clap hands in rythm pattern.

Play games. Example: "Simon Says:, "I Spy" and "Moving Water-Still Water".

Wiggle body parts and conclude with wiggle whole self then sit with hands in lap.

Quiet Time RequiresTransition Ideas

Imagine you are a tired puppy- yawn, stretch, and roll on the floor. Then get very still.

Listen to music. Identify various instruments. Then children can listen for various instruments.

Show film strip on the ceiling with or without narration.

Select a book and read only part of the story each day.

Preparing For Listening

Lock lips and put the key on your shoulder.

Put on elephant ears, rabbit ears or cat ears.

Clap hands beginning loud and fast. Then get softer and slower until hands are in lab and all is quiet. This can be done by substituting a poem or rhyme for clapping hands.

Moving From Place to Place in the Building

Walk like animals. Example: bear, elephant.

Children will form a line with the teacher being the engine. Assign the last child to be the caboose to turn the light off and close the door.

Walk down the hall or the playground looking for color, shapes, letters, counting shapes or designated items.

Turn your jump rope into a worm or caterpillar by attaching a head to one end and a tail at the other. Children form the body and legs by holding on to the rope with one hand while walking to another place in the building or taking outside walks.

Grouping Children, Changing Centers or Completing Activities

Signals indicate time to change centers, complete activities or clean up. Flash lights, ring a bell, play a musical instrument or set a timer or alarm clock.

Have a get ready signal such as flashing lights or ring a bell for the children to know they have five more minutes to complete task and clean up for the next activity.

With masking tape place a line on the floor by the various centers or work areas. As children finish they go to the line and with the next signal move to the next place.

Songs For Transition

By Betty Ruth Baker

Greeting Song

Tune: The Farmer in the Dell

Teacher Sings:

I'm glad you came today.

I'm glad you came today.

Hello, hello to everyone.

I'm glad you came today.

Children Sing:

We're glad we came today.

We're glad we came today.

Hello, hello to everyone.

We're glad we came today.

All Sing:

We'll work and play today.

We'll work and play today.

Hello, hello to everyone.

We'll work and play today.

Let's have a happy day.

Let's have a happy day.

Hello, hello to everyone.

Let's have a happy day.

Note: Wave hands in greeting when singing hello.

I Like School

Tune: Farmer in the Dell

I like to go to school.

I like to go to school.

High Ho the derry oh,

I like to go to school.

I like to look at books.

I like to look at books.

High Ho the derry oh,

I like to look at books.

I like to build with blocks.

I like to build with blocks.

High Ho the derry oh,

I like to build with blocks.

I like to listen to stories.

I like to listen to stories.

High ho the derry oh,

I like to listen to stories.

I like to draw and paint.

I like to draw and paint.

High Ho the derry oh,

I like to draw and paint.

I like to sing new songs.

I like to sing new songs.

High Ho the derry oh,

I like to sing new songs.

I like to play with friends.

I like to play with friends.

High Ho the derry oh,

I like to play with friends.

Getting Ready

Tune: Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

This is the way we get ready to listen,

Ready to listen, ready to listen.

This is the way we get ready to listen,

To listen to the story.

Note: Substitute the words "directions" or "teacher" for the word "story".

This is the way we get ready to look,

Ready to look, ready to look.

This is the way we get ready to look,

To look at the pictures.

Note: Substitute the words "puppet", "chart", "flannel board", and "book" for "pictures".

Quiet Time

Tune: Frere Jacques

It is quiet time.

It is quiet time.

Time to rest,

Time to rest.

Quiet children resting.

Quiet children resting.

This is best; this is best.

Time Song

Tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb

It is time for lunch,

Time for lunch, time for lunch.

It is time for lunch,

Time for lunch today.

Note: Substitute "go to the playground", "go home", "go the the circle", and "go to the library" for the word lunch.

Helper Song

Tune: I'm a Little Tea Pot

I'm a little helper,

Look at me.

I'm as busy as I can be.

I put away the toys as you can see.

I'm ready for the circle.

Look at me.

Going To School

Tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb

Five happy children, children, children.

Five happy children going to school today.

(Hold up hand)

The first child said, "I'll follow the rules, follow the rules, follow the rules."

The first child said, "I'll follow the rules,

Follow the rules today."

(Move thumb)

The second child said, "I'll listen and look,

listen and look, listen and look."

The second child said, "I'll listen and look,

Listen and look today."

(Move first finger)

The third child said, "I'll read a book,

read a book, read a book."

The third child said, "I'll read a book,

Read a book today."
(Move second finger)

The fourth child said, "I'll run and play,
run and play, run and play."
The fouth child said, "I'll run and play,
Run and play today."
(Move third finger)

The fifth child said, "I'm glad I came today,
glad I came, glad I came."
The fifth child said, "I'm glad I came today,
Glad I came to school today."
(Move small finger)

Good-by Song
Tune: Farmer in the Dell

It's time to go home.
It's time to go home.
Good-by to everyone
It's time to go home.

We had a happy day.

We had a happy day.

Wave good-by to everyone.

We had a happy day.

We'll see you again.

We'll see you again.

Wave good-by to everyone.

We'll see you again.

Will You Come

Tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb

Will you come and sit with me

Sit with me, sit with me?

Will you come and sit with me,

and listen to a story?

Note: "Sit in a circle", "look at a book", "sit at the table", "sit on the carpet", may be substituted for "listen to a story".

Will you come and stand with me,

Stand with me, stand with me?

Will you come and stand with me,

Stand in a line.

Note: "Stand in a circle" may be substituted for "stand in a line". Shapes cards, numeral cards, color cards or alphabet cards may be placed on the floor and the object name may be substituted for "in a line".

Conclusion

Transition time should provide children with an opportunity for continued imaginative and creative thinking. Activities should be motivating, relaxing, and reinforcing. Transition should prepare children for the experience to follow. With appropriate selection and planning of activities to meet the needs of children transition times can be an effective part of the day.

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